VI. *An Extract of a Letter from Mr.* Thomas Luffkin *of* Colcheſter *to Dr.* Wallis, *concerning the uſe of the* Numeral Figures *in* England, *as old as the Year* 1090. *And, concerning the* Application *of an* Air-pump, *to Cupping-glaſſes.*

Colcheſter, June 22. 1699.

Reverend Sir,

I Having lately taken notice of your accurate Treatiſe of Hiſtoric and Practic Algebra, and finding therein that you cannot Trace the uſe of *Numeral Figures* amongſt us in *England* lower than the Year 1133; and I meeting with an undeniable inſtance of their exceeding that Age by 43 Years amongſt us, I thought the Communication of it to you could not but prove ſatisfactory. And if it really do ſo, I ſhall injoy the utmoſt of my ambition. The account take as followeth; Over againſt our Market-place, ſtands the Houſe of Mr. *Furly*, a Linnen-Draper; ſome of the backermoſt part of which is an Ancient *Roman* building, but the Front is of Leſſer ſtanding, and Timbred. Upon the bottom Cell (which is almoſt in the form of a Triangular Priſm) of one of the Windows of the Front, between two Carved Lions, ſtands an Eſcutchion, containing only theſe Figures 1090 (as near as my rude hand can delineate them.) They are of a Secretary form [*or rather ſquare Text*,] the Periphery of the Ciphers, and Nine, are rather Fracted than Flected, prominent, large, and very fair; but to make them the more perſpicuous, they are Guilded by the Proprietor. The Window looks directly North; the Date being thereby preſerved from

from the ſcorching heat of the Sun; and by its inclination (falling from the Verten [or *perpendicular*] by an Angle of about 60 degrees) from Rain, Snow, *&c.* It's poſſible that it may be objected that the Second and Fourth Figures, may repreſent that amongſt the *Arabians* (from whom we ſeem to have received our Numeral Figures, and they theirs, from the *Indians*.) which is with us a 5; To this I anſwer, that the Window is in *England* and not in *Arabia*; nor is there any likelyhood that ever it was imported from thence; [*nor is* o *with all the Arabs, uſed for* 5, *but with ſome for a Cipher, and ſo it was uſed by the Moors in* Spain, *who firſt brought theſe Figures into our parts*; *nor is the Square* 0 *an* Arabick *Letter, but an Engliſh Letter, of that Age.*] And the form of theſe Figures ſoon degenerated from that of the *Arabs*, into ſuch as we now uſe, if not at the firſt reception from the *Arabs* [or *Moors*] certainly long before 1595 (as this conſtruction would make it.) *Sir*, about three Months ſince I received your Letter in Anſwer to one of mine. In order to compenſate which favour, I ſhall (if you teſtify your willingneſs to receive it) oblige you with a deſcription of an improvement, or rather invention (of my Brothers) of a neat, compact, very portable *Air-pump*, applyed to Cupping; with 2 or 3 Suctions of which, a perſon may exhauſt the Air from a Large Cupping-Glaſs; and, by the preſſure of the External Air upon the Circumiacent parts of the Body (and not by *fuga vacui*) the Fleſh ſhall be admirably forced up into the Glaſs; and, by continuing of the Suction as need ſhall require, he may take away what quantity of blood he pleaſeth. It is an Invention of extraordinary advantage to Mankind, *&c.*

Your moſt obliged Servant

Thomas Luſſkin.

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